(d) whether it is a fact that benefit of all the schemes does not reach the dependants; and

(e) the steps proposed by Government to remedy the situation?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) During 2008 one air warrior, 776951-B Sergeant Mustafa Ali of Indian Air Force (IAF) was killed in naxalite attack at Pedia hill heliped on 14th November, 2008.

(b) and (c) Besides the Family Pension and Death-cum-Retirement Gratuity (DCRG), the following facilities and benefits are provided to the family of the AF personnel killed in naxalite attack:

(i) On receipt of claim from the claimant, the Pending Enquiry Award is given to the family;

(ii) Armed Forces Personnel Provident Fund is finalized on receipt of necessary documents;

(iii) Group Insurance Society Grant is provided after receiving the request from the Next of Kin;

(iv) IAF Benevolent Association Rehabilitation Grant, as applicable;

(v) *Ex-gratia* amount, as applicable, is sanctioned on finalization of the family pension and DCRG;

(vi) The eligible family member is entitled to Liberalised Family Pension, as applicable;

(vii) Some additional benefits, as applicable, from Air Force Wives Welfare Association are also provided.

(d) and (e) The benefits of all the schemes reach the dependents.

Delay in acquisition of new military hardware

275. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's plans to replace the ageing and obsolete defence weaponry are making a sluggish progress with acquisition of new military hardware taking anything around three to five years;

(b) whether India has not acquired any new critical hardware like Howitzers, Night Vision Devices or Assault Rifles for the last five/six years; and

(c) what is the progress made on preparing a Defence Purchase Manual to speed up security hardware deals both single vendor and multi vender?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (c) Replacement of ageing and obsolete defence weaponry is part of modernization of the Armed Forces which is a continuous process based on threat perception, technological changes and budget allocation. The process involves formulation of a Long Term Integrated Perspective Plan (LTIPP), five years Services Capital Acquisition Plan (SCAP) and Annual Acquisition Plan (AAP). Procurement of

required equipment and weapon system is carried out as per the AAP and in accordance with the Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP). On the basis of experience gained in its implementation, the DPP-2006 was reviewed and the DPP-2008 came into effect from 1.9.2008. The DPP-2008 has incorporated certain measures to expedite the process of procurement. In addition, the delegation of financial powers to the Service Headquarters for sanctioning capital proposals have been enhanced.

The procedure for procurement of defence equipment under revenue head is already laid down in the Defence Procurement Manual (DPM) 2006.

While contract for procurement of Assault Rifles has been concluded recently, procurement case for Howitzers and Night Vision Devices are in progress.

Return of artifacts seized from Golden Temple during Blue Star

276. SARDAR TARLOCHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Sikh organizations have approached him for the return of books, old hand written Sikh documents which were taken by Army from Golden Temple during Blue Star;

(b) whether after occupation of Golden Temple complex, Army carried away all the artifacts, books, papers, currency etc. and whether there was any entry made of all these with the Army authorities;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) how long it will take to hand over all the items to Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC)?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (d) The Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) has approached the Government with similar requests in the past. All books, documents and miscellaneous items recovered from the premises of Golden Temple complex during Operation Blue Star, have been handed over to the SGPC, Amritsar and its functionaries, Curator Museum (Punjab Government), Government Treasurer, Amritsar (Punjab), Department of Cultural Affairs, Chandigarh (Punjab) and CBI, New Delhi. The Army does not possess any of the manuscripts/articles recovered from the Golden temple during Operation Blue Star and the representative of SGPC had also certified that they have no further claim on the Army or the Government.

Recruitments in armed forces from the State of Punjab

277. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of persons recruited from the State of Punjab for Defence Services during the last three years ending on 31st December, 2008 year-wise, force-wise and recruitment centre-wise; and